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ABSTRACT

This publication shares three "best teaching practices" as identified by the Ohio Literacy Resource Center from responses from Ohio's adult literacy programs. "Identifying Errors in Writing" (Mary Cupilary) is a writing improvement strategy/lesson that involves selecting one sentence from a paragraph written by each student, writing them verbatim on a large chart with no author identified, and using them to help students identify errors and correct usage in grammar, spelling, and sentence structure. "Using Classroom Journals with ESL [English as a Second Language] Students" (Sandy Stewart) is designed around journal starters that are used to write one entry per class. The activity includes a teacher response to each entry, student creation of a spelling notebook from misspelled words, student creation of editing exercises, and compilation of journal entries into a book, generating text for the students to read. "Window on the World: Map Skills and Current Events" (Kathryn Jackson) involves the choice of four geographical sites each week from articles in the newspaper, social studies lessons, or students' requests; student location of specified information about the site and completion of exercises; and class discussion on Fridays of the sites and reason(s) why a site was in the news, of a theme for a social studies lesson, or something of particular interest. (YLB)

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Ohio Literacy Resource Center

Enhancing adult literacy in the State of Ohio

Teacher To Teacher

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--The Exchange--

BEST TEACHING PRACTICES FROM AROUND OHIO

In January 1995, the Ohio Literacy Resource Center put out a call for best teaching practices from Ohio's adult literacy programs. We were looking for lessons or strategies that have been effective and successful for adult students. Having spread the word through several state organization newsletters, we received enough responses to select several that we believe to be the "best of the best."

We are hoping to continue this practice of collecting information about instructors' best teaching practices, but we need your help to do so. Please let us know what you do that is particularly successful with your students. Good instructional lessons and strategies need to be shared! Please write us a note or give us a call telling us about the lesson or strategy that works best for your students.

Identifying Errors in Writing

Mary Cupilary
Read for Literacy, Toledo

Mary begins this lesson by having her students write brief paragraphs on a given topic. Next, she pulls one sentence from each person's work, writing them verbatim on a large chart. Authors are not identified. The goal of this lesson is to use these sentences to help students identify errors and correct usage in grammar, spelling, and sentence structure. Mary believes that this activity is more meaningful and authentic because the sentences being critiqued and edited come from the students' own writing.

Several important factors need to be stressed if one uses this model:

1. Anonymity of the sentences.
2. Tact in presenting the sentences as well as finding and correcting the errors.
3. Emphasizing the positive of all correct usages as well as the errors,

Mary evaluates the success of this lesson by the improvement that she can see in her students' writing skills. She states that she first began using this in 1972 and continues to use it because she "saw improvement right away."

For more information about Mary's writing improvement strategy, call (419) 242-7323.

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Using Classroom Journals with ESL Students

Sandy Stewart
Eastland Career Center, Groveport

Sandy uses the first 30 minutes of each class period as a writing workshop. A "journal starter" is on the board when the students arrive, so they can begin writing at their own pace. Using the journal starter as a lead sentence, the students then develop the idea, writing at least one paragraph. Sandy later responds to each entry, editing and commenting on grammar, spelling, and sentence structure. Using their journal entries to create their own materials, the students make spelling notebooks from the words they misspelled and create editing exercises. Journal entries are compiled into a book, generating text for the students to read.

Sandy evaluates the success of this lesson by observing the gradual improvement of the students' entries over time. She then saves their best writing samples in a portfolio.

For 2 ½ years, Sandy has been practicing journal writing with her ESL students. She has developed a list of 75 journal starters that are intended specifically for ESL students. "Another beneficial aspect of this technique is the way it helps the instructor learn more about the student," she said.

Following are some of Sandy's journal starters:

1. I think it is _____ to live in the USA.
2. Shopping in my native country is different than shopping in the USA.
3. When I was very young, I believed that...
4. I grew up in _____. It was a very _____ place.

For further information about Sandy's journal starters, call (614) 836-3903.

Window on the World: Map Skills and Current Events

Kathryn Jackson
Shawen Acres ABLE Center, Dayton

Kathryn devised this lesson to help her students become familiar with maps of the USA and world. Each week, she chooses 4 geographical sites, taking them from articles in the newspaper, social studies lessons, or students' requests. She posts a different site name on the bulletin board each day. On Friday, the class reviews each site and discusses the reasons why a site is in the news, a theme for a social studies lesson, or of particular interest to someone.

Each student is supplied with two materials: a four-column form asking for assignment date, site name, type (i.e., city, country), and location; and a two-sided map (USA on one side, the world on the other). Students are responsible for locating the above information and completing the exercises for Friday's class discussion. Kathryn has been using this strategy for over two years.

Compiled by: Sarah Nixon-Ponder

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